

RETAIL PRICES - DECEMBER QUARTER, 1948.

All Items - "C" Series.

Index numbers (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1000) of retail prices of all items ("C" Series) for the December quarter, 1948, with figures for September quarter, 1948, for comparison (in brackets), were:- Brisbane, 1291 (1251); Toowoomba, 1292 (1260); Rockhampton, 1290 (1259); Townsville, 1335 (1300); Bundaberg, 1276 (1241); and Warwick, 1282 (1249).

The increase of 40 points recorded in the Brisbane index was the greatest absolute rise in any quarter since prices started rising in the early 1930's, and the relative rise (3.2 per cent. on the September quarter level) has been exceeded only twice - in June quarter, 1936, 3.7 per cent., and in December quarter, 1940, 3.5 per cent. During the whole of the war and post-war period to the end of 1947, only occasional quarters showed a rise in prices of 2 per cent. or more; but from the December quarter of 1947 each quarter has shown such an increase, figures for the last five quarters being 2.4, 2.6, 2.8, 2.0, and 3.2 per cent. respectively. In the twelve months ended December, 1948, the index rose by 11.0 per cent., compared with 4.8 per cent. in the previous twelve months.

During the December quarter, the increases in the other five cities of Queensland from which data are obtained were less than in Brisbane, but all were at least 2.5 per cent. Food and groceries contributed most to the quarter's rise, the increases for Brisbane being 5.6 per cent. for food and groceries and 3.5 per cent. for clothing and footwear. Although Brisbane clothing and footwear prices are now 119.2 per cent. above their 1938-39 level, compared with 49.5 per cent. for food and groceries, prices of the latter have been rising faster during the last two years, food prices having risen by 32.1 per cent. since September quarter, 1946, compared with 20.0 per cent. for clothing and footwear.

The indexes show the following percentage increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series, Percentage Increases, December Quarter, 1948.

City.			From Year Ended June, 1939.	From December Quarter, 1947.	From September quarter, 1948.
			%	%	%
Brisbane	..	..	49.6	11.0	3.2
Toowoomba	..	..	51.8	10.0	2.5
Rockhampton	..	..	49.8	10.9	2.5
Townsville	..	..	46.4	11.2	2.7
Bundaberg	..	..	51.7	12.7	2.8
Warwick	..	..	56.0	10.1	2.6

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases, December Quarter, 1948.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Sept. Quarter, 1948.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Sept. Quarter, 1948.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Sept. Quarter, 1948.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane	49.5	5.6	119.2	3.5	31.3	0.8
Toowoomba	58.4	4.2	112.8	3.2	30.4	0.1
Rockhampton	46.8	4.5	112.3	2.3	34.2	0.8
Townsville	43.1	4.5	115.1	2.8	32.7	0.8
Bundaberg	47.5	4.8	116.3	2.6	30.0	1.0
Warwick	52.5	4.4	119.5	3.1	31.9	0.9

Food and Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses) - "B" Series.

Index numbers for food and rent only ("B" Series) for December quarter, 1948 (with base 1000 in 1923-1927 for the six capital cities) were:- Brisbane, 1116; Toowoomba, 1126; Rockhampton, 1107; Townsville, 1169; Bundaberg, 1077; and Warwick, 1080.

From September quarter, 1948, to December quarter, 1948, the "B" Series index showed the following increases:- Brisbane, 3.9%; Toowoomba, 3.1%; Rockhampton, 3.3%; Townsville, 3.2%; Bundaberg, 3.6%; and Warwick, 3.2%.

The principal rises in food prices were in potatoes, pork, beef, milk, and bread, but decreases were recorded in the prices of the various cuts of mutton.

The rent index increased in Toowoomba, 0.8%, and Rockhampton, 0.1%, but remained stationary in Brisbane, Townsville, Bundaberg, and Warwick.

Compared with December quarter, 1947, the "B" Series index increased as follows:- Brisbane, 11.5%; Toowoomba, 10.8%; Rockhampton, 11.9%; Townsville, 11.2%; Bundaberg, 12.9%; and Warwick, 11.0%.

Clothing, Footwear, and Miscellaneous Items.

Clothing and footwear prices increased still further during the quarter. The index for Brisbane is now 119.2 per cent. above that for the year ended June, 1939. Women's and girls' frocks and straw hats, men's and boys' suits, men's pyjamas, and all footwear showed considerable increases.

The miscellaneous items index showed only a small increase during the quarter (0.8 per cent. in Brisbane), and is now 31.3 per cent. above its pre-war level.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in December quarter, 1948, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.
Toowoomba ..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	2.	1.	0.	4.	19.	5.	
Rockhampton ..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	6.	18.	3.		19.	9.	
Townsville ..	1.	0.	8.	1.	1.	4.	1.	0.	0.	19.	11.	
Bundaberg ..		19.	9.	1.	0.	10.	15.	10.		1.	0.	0.
Warwick ..		19.	10.	1.	0.	2.	17.	6.		19.	11.	

During the quarter, price rises were slightly greater in Brisbane than in the provincial cities. Average prices in Toowoomba and Rockhampton are now the same as in Brisbane, while in Townsville goods cost 8d. in the pound more than in Brisbane. In Bundaberg and Warwick, goods costing £1 in Brisbane can be purchased for 3d. and 2d. less respectively.

Basic Wage Rates in State Capital Cities.

The following table shows, for the December quarter of 1948, the retail price index number ("C" Series) for each of the six capital cities and the prevailing basic wage rates for males prescribed by Commonwealth and State industrial tribunals respectively. The fourth column shows the amounts which would have been required in Brisbane to provide a standard of living equivalent to that provided by each State basic wage in its own capital city. The differences between these amounts and the State basic wage for Brisbane, which are given in the last column, show the margin of advantage in real purchasing power provided by the Queensland basic wage over each of the other State basic wages.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates - December Quarter, 1948.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series) 4th Quarter, 1948.	Commonwealth Court Basic Wage for Males at 15.11.48.	State Court Basic Wage for Males at 15.11.48.	Equivalent at Brisbane Prices of Each State Basic Wage.	Margin of Purchasing Power in Favour of Brisbane State Basic Wage.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	s. d.
Brisbane ..	1291	5. 15. 0.	5. 19. 0.	5. 19. 0.	-
Sydney ..	1359	6. 2. 0.	6. 2. 0.	5. 15. 11.	3. 1.
Melbourne ..	1345	6. 0. 0.	6. 0. 0.	5. 15. 2.	3. 10.
Adelaide ..	1327	5. 16. 0.	5. 17. 0.	5. 13. 10.	5. 2.
Perth ..	1316	5. 16. 0.	6. 1. 7.	5. 19. 3.	-0. 3.
Hobart ..	1344	5. 18. 0.	5. 18. 0.	5. 13. 4.	5. 8.

Following the publication of the index numbers shown in the above table, the basic wage of the Commonwealth Court was automatically adjusted from 1st February, 1949. The new rates and the amounts of the adjustments are shown below, together with the latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated.

Basic Wage Rates - March Quarter, 1949.

Capital City.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.		State Basic Wage.		
	Amount. ^a	Increase on Previous Quarter.	Males.	Females.	Date of Operation.
	£ s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Brisbane ..	5. 18. 0.	3. 0.	6. 2. 0.	3. 14. 6.	31. 1.49
Sydney ..	6. 4. 0.	2. 0.	6. 4. 0.	3. 7. 0.	1. 2.49 ^b
Melbourne ..	6. 3. 0.	3. 0.	(6. 3. 0.)	(3. 6. 6.)	(1. 2.49) ^b
Adelaide ..	5. 19. 0.	3. 0.	5. 17. 0.	3. 6. 6.	7. 7.48 ^c
Perth ..	5. 18. 0.	2. 0.	6. 4. 9.	3. 7. 4.	9. 2.49
Hobart ..	6. 1. 0.	3. 0.	(6. 1. 0.)	(3. 5. 6.)	(1. 2.49) ^b

^a Rate for males. The female rate is generally 54 per cent. of the male rate.

^b No State wage declared, but rates shown are those of Commonwealth Court which are followed to a large extent.

^c No adjustment following publication of December quarter index number had been made to date of issue of this bulletin.

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Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.
(Base = 1000 in 1923-1927 in Six State Capitals.)

City.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended Decr., 1948.	Quarters Ended -				
				Decr., 1947.	March, 1948.	June, 1948.	Sept., 1948.	Decr., 1948.
Brisbane ..	917	863	1241	1163	1193	1227	1251	1291
Toowoomba ..	906	851	1246	1175	1199	1232	1260	1292
Rockhampton ..	903	861	1241	1163	1191	1225	1259	1290
Townsville ..	1023	912	1282	1201	1230	1263	1300	1335
Bundaberg ..	b	841	1221	1132	1165	1203	1241	1276
Weighted Average Five Towns ^a	915	864	1244	1165	1195	1229	1256	1294
Warwick ..	914	822	1234	1164	1185	1220	1249	1282

^a Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

^b Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 2 - Food, Groceries, and Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses) Index - "B" Series.
(Base = 1000 in 1923-1927 in Six State Capitals.)

City.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended Decr., 1948.	Quarters Ended -				
				Decr., 1947.	March, 1948.	June, 1948.	Sept., 1948.	Decr., 1948.
Brisbane ..	901	852	1072	1001	1039	1058	1074	1116
Toowoomba ..	833	821	1087	1016	1055	1073	1092	1126
Rockhampton ..	858	837	1063	989	1025	1047	1072	1107
Townsville ..	1047	916	1125	1051	1089	1109	1133	1169
Bundaberg ..	b	799	1030	954	992	1012	1040	1077
Weighted Average Five Towns ^a	892	851	1074	1003	1041	1060	1078	1118
Warwick ..	841	768	1039	973	1004	1023	1047	1080

^a Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

^b Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 3 - Average Retail Prices of Food and Groceries, Brisbane.

Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Month of -		Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Month of -	
		Sept., 1948.	Decr., 1948.			Sept., 1948.	Decr., 1948.
	d.	d.	d.		d.	d.	d.
Bread .. 2 lb.	5.53	7.25	7.50	Eggs .. 1 doz.	19.69	30.00	30.00
Flour .. 2 lb.	3.73	5.36	5.41	Milk .. 1 qt.	6.00	8.10	8.55
Tea .. 1 lb.	26.99	33.00	33.00	Beef -			
Sugar .. 1 lb.	3.98	4.44	4.46	Sirloin Roast 1 lb.	8.73	15.50	17.00
Sago .. 1 lb.	3.00	15.80	15.45	Steak, Rump 1 lb.	11.34	20.00	21.50
Jam, Plum 1½ lb.	8.02	15.59	15.64	Steak, Chuck 1 lb.	5.83	9.55	10.50
Oats, Flaked 1 lb.	3.57	4.60	4.60	Rolled			
Raisins 1 lb.	10.57	15.93	16.25	Brisket 1 lb.	5.48	9.60	10.50
Potatoes 7 lb.	14.88	10.41	21.00	Mutton -			
Onions .. 1 lb.	2.93	3.09	2.64	Leg .. 1 lb.	7.75	12.60	12.20
Soap .. 1 lb.	6.20	9.94	9.91	Loin Chops 1 lb.	7.78	13.00	11.44
Butter .. 1 lb.	19.00	25.91	25.91	Pork -			
Cheese .. 1 lb.	13.28	17.41	17.50	Leg .. 1 lb.	11.40	16.44	22.80
				Chops .. 1 lb.	11.48	19.39	23.45

RETAIL PRICES INDEX.

Table No. 1.

THE "ALL ITEMS" INDEX - "C" SERIES.
(Base = 1000 in 1923-1927 in Six State Capitals.)

City.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended Sept., 1948.	QUARTERS ENDED -				
				Sept., 1947.	December, 1947.	March, 1948.	June, 1948.	Sept., 1948.
Brisbane ..	917	863	1209	1136	1163	1193	1227	1251
Toowoomba ..	906	851	1217	1153	1175	1199	1232	1260
Rockhampton ..	903	861	1210	1142	1163	1191	1225	1259
Townsville ..	1023	912	1249	1181	1201	1230	1263	1300
Bundaberg ..	(b)	841	1185	1111	1132	1165	1203	1241
Weighted Average								
Five Towns (a)	915	864	1211	1140	1165	1195	1229	1256
Warwick ..	914	822	1205	1139	1164	1185	1220	1249

(a) Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

(b) Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 2. FOOD, GROCERIES AND RENT (4 AND 5 ROOMED HOUSES) INDEX - "B" SERIES.
(Base = 1000 in 1923-1927 in Six State Capitals.)

City.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended Sept., 1948.	QUARTERS ENDED -				
				Sept., 1947.	December, 1947.	March, 1948.	June, 1948.	Sept., 1948.
Brisbane ..	901	852	1043	977	1001	1039	1058	1074
Toowoomba ..	833	821	1059	1000	1016	1055	1073	1092
Rockhampton ..	858	837	1033	971	989	1025	1047	1072
Townsville ..	1047	916	1096	1034	1051	1089	1109	1133
Bundaberg ..	(b)	799	1000	938	954	992	1012	1040
Weighted Average								
Five Towns (a)	892	851	1046	981	1003	1041	1060	1078
Warwick ..	841	768	1012	954	973	1004	1023	1047

(a) Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

(b) Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 3. AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES - FOOD AND GROCERIES, BRISBANE.

Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	MONTH OF -		Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	MONTH OF -	
		June, 1948.	Sept., 1948.			June, 1948.	Sept., 1948.
	d.	d.	d.		d.	d.	d.
Bread .. 2 lb.	5.33	7.25	7.25	Eggs .. 1 doz.	19.69	38.00	30.00
Flour .. 2 lb.	3.73	5.32	5.36	Milk .. 1 qt.	6.00	8.10	8.10
Tea .. 1 lb.	26.99	33.00	33.00	Beef -			
Sugar .. 1 lb.	3.98	4.44	4.44	Sirloin Roast 1 lb.	8.73	15.50	15.50
Sago .. 1 lb.	3.00	16.06	15.80	Steak, Rump 1 lb.	11.34	20.00	20.00
Jam (Plum) 1½ lb.	8.02	15.55	15.59	Steak, Chuck 1 lb.	5.83	9.55	9.55
Oats - Flaked 1 lb.	3.57	4.60	4.60	Rolled			
Raisins .. 1 lb.	10.57	15.42	15.93	Brisket 1 lb.	5.48	9.55	9.60
Potatoes .. 7 lb.	14.88	10.41	10.41	Mutton -			
Onions .. 1 lb.	2.93	3.59	3.09	Leg .. 1 lb.	7.75	12.55	12.60
Soap .. 1 lb.	6.20	9.24	9.94	Loin Chops 1 lb.	7.78	13.00	13.00
Butter .. 1 lb.	19.00	23.41	25.91	Pork -			
Cheese .. 1 lb.	13.28	16.32	17.41	Leg .. 1 lb.	11.40	16.40	16.44
				Chops .. 1 lb.	11.48	19.50	19.39